

By Wil Robinson

A Poem for a Friend on Valentine's Day

Nothing like talking late night with my Sri Lanka new found friend.
It's comforting for bad dreams are kept at bay and they're there to stay.
She is at least 15 feet away, when the bar closes that day.

That's when I feel like I can see her glow.
The barely lit room catches her smile assuring me that there is still hope in
the world today.
I wonder if her smile will last forever but then again I guess nothing lasts
forever.

She tells me of her hometown in Rayong, southeast of Bangkok past the
crocodile farm by the oil refineries and the ocean beyond.
She misses her mae and her grandmother as a goldfish on land struggling
misses it's pond.

Her restaurant has lot's of partying, music, talking, drinking, thinking, of
nothing but, fun.
She gets to sleep until noon "na la fun dee" is like a setting sun.

By morning I need another fix of her and by Tuesday or Wednesday I might
be as human as her.
Every week I try to avoid her smile. Her face so pure and simple as the
Nile.
She never turns anyone away. My eyes are withered and swollen from
hiding from her gaze all day.

Everyone tells her "kow mai dee" referring to me.
I guess I've laid down quite a reputation.
A regretful reputation of day and night alcohol consumption smiling
medication and "oak hugs" for celebration.

I wait just to get 5 minutes of quality time so that I might know her smile as
it fills up with thyme.
I long to lie next to her smile as it twinkles and shines like a dime.

Her hair smells of spicy larb gai and sticky rice because she's busy cooking
all day.
Her hands are tough and small. She used hand cream at the bus stop earlier
that today.

She always says she has plenty money. I think no money no honey.
I think she medicates her heart with work, Hennessey, and toil.
Never taking a moment to breath or peek. An ostrich's head stuck in the
soil.

She always tells me she can take care of herself.
And I say I can barely do my laundry because I'm busy driving down
Sunset literally running into her all day.
Looking for that 5 minutes of quality time in the wet cold rain I see her on
the corner and I realize everything is going to be ay ok.

I watch as they pull on her. I'm afraid. She might snap like a wishbone,
dividing her smile someday.
Maybe her smile will break apart into a bunch of little pieces.
And everyone can take one home with them for her smile even exhausted
still seizes the day.